



# MAYOR'S NEWS RELEASE

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Released February 14, 1991

## AUTO THEFT ACTION PLAN

- I. WHAT CITIZENS CAN DO
  - A. BE ALERT AND REPORT ANY SUSPICIOUS PERSONS TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME PREVENTION UNIT
  - B. FOLLOW BASIC AUTO THEFT PREVENTION GUIDELINES
    - 1. LOCK ALL CAR DOORS AND SECURE CAR WINDOWS
    - 2. DO NOT LEAVE VALUABLES IN PLAIN VIEW
    - 3. PARK IN WELL-LIT AREAS
  - C. INVEST IN AN ~~IN~~EXPENSIVE LOCKING DEVICE:  
J BAR, THE CLUB, LOCKING BAR, STEEL SLEEVE
- II. WHAT POLICE WILL BE DOING
  - A. THEY WILL BE INITIATING POLICE SURVEILLANCE OF AREAS WITH HIGH INCIDENTS OF CAR THEFT
  - B. CAT (COMBAT AUTO THEFT) PROGRAM IN WHICH AUTO OWNERS GIVE POLICE OFFICERS CONSENT TO STOP THEIR AUTOS IF A PERSON UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE IS OPERATING VEHICLE. IF PROPER I.D. IS NOT PROVIDED THEN FURTHER INVESTIGATION BY POLICE IS ALLOWED.
- III. COUNTY LEVEL/PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
  - A. REQUEST THE MERCER COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT AND PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE TO REEXAMINE THE SENTENCING POLICY FOR PERSONS CONVICTED OF AUTO THEFT RELATED CHARGES
  - B. ASK THAT THE CITY BE KEPT INFORMED OF PLEA BARGAINS IN WHICH THE PENALTY OR CHARGES WILL BE REDUCED
  - C. ASK THAT IN LIEU OF INCARCERATION, THAT VISIBLE COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR OFFENDERS BE ADDED AS PUNISHMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY AWARE OF THESE OFFENDERS HAVING COMMITTED AUTO THEFT
  - D. PETITION OUR COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL PROSECUTORS TO SEEK SUBSTANTIAL FINES FOR OFFENDERS WHO ARE FOUND OR PLEAD GUILTY TO AUTO THEFT. IN THIS WAY, IF FINES ARE NOT PAID, A CONTEMPT CITATION CAN BE ISSUED

#### IV. CITY ADMINISTRATION

- A. I WILL BE REACHING OUT TO THE MEDIA TO PROVIDE PSA (PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT) REGARDING WHAT CITIZENS CAN DO TO PREVENT AUTO THEFT
- B. I WILL BE SPEAKING WITH OUT LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES, INSURANCE CARRIERS, NJ CONFERENCE OF MAYORS AND STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ABOUT ADOPTING A STATE-WIDE AUTO THEFT PREVENTION PROGRAM LIKE THE ONE IN MICHIGAN

#### MICHIGAN MODEL:

##### AUTOMOBILE THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY (ATPA)

- ESTABLISHED IN 1986 BY THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE TO RESPOND TO A SERIOUS AUTO THEFT PROBLEM
- FUNDED BY ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS ON AUTO INSURANCE COMPANIES WHO DO BUSINESS IN MICHIGAN
- DURING 1990, ATPA FUNDS PAY FOR 92 POLICE OFFICERS, 7 COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS AND 18 SUPPORT STAFF
- THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES HAVE DRASTICALLY HELPED DECREASE AUTO THEFTS IN MICHIGAN
- FROM 1985 to 1989 AUTO THEFT IN MICHIGAN DECREASED 13% COMPARED TO AN INCREASE OF 41.9% NATIONALLY (TEXAS BY 52%, FLORIDA BY 71%, NEW JERSEY BY 42%)
- IN 1985, MICHIGAN WAS RANKED AS THE 2ND STATE WITH THE HIGHEST AUTO THEFT RATE PER POPULATION

IN 1989, MICHIGAN DROPPED TO 10TH PLACE